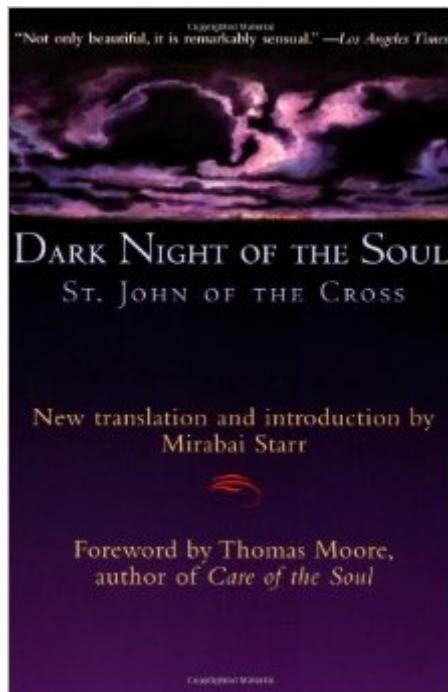


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Dark Night Of The Soul



Synopsis

While imprisoned in a tiny prison cell for his attempts to reform the Church, sixteenth-century Spanish mystic John of the Cross composed many of his now classic poems of the soul's longing for God. Written on a scroll smuggled to him by one of his guards, his songs are the ultimate expression of the spiritual seeker's journey from estranged despair to blissful union with the divine. After escaping his captors, John fell into a state of profound ecstasy and wrote *Dark Night of the Soul*. Later, he added an important commentary to his poem to guide other searching souls along the arduous path to communion with God. Here, for the first time, a scholar unaffiliated with the Catholic Church has translated this timeless work. Mirabai Starr, who has studied Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism, lends the seeker's sensibility to John's powerful text and brings this classic work to the twenty-first century in a brilliant and beautiful rendering.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

By Sister Elizabeth Ruth, O.D.C., Carmel of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk St. John of the Cross is known as the Mystical Doctor, because in a pre-eminent way he is the director of men on their interior journey towards God. As a spiritual guide and deeply religious man, trained in theology at the best Spanish universities of his day, he was able, as few others, to elucidate scripturally and doctrinally the ways of the Lord. Primarily, though, he is a poet, and his poetry speaks for itself in deeply symbolic language, the language of love. He is also a man of his country and era. His two poles Toda-Nada, All-Nothing, no doubt were associated for him with the rugged beauty of

Castile--the blazing Spanish sky above arid ground, with the sun glinting upon walled cities, the freezing night with brigands concealed in the darkness. John and Spain speak the language of extremes, just as St. Francis of Assisi was a man of the Umbrian hills set with flowers and vines among shaded valleys. There is a tendency to contrast the harshness of one with the sweetness of the other, but this is to do a disservice to both. Both at heart are similar because they see the way to God as the way of giving all-desiring nothing but him, and letting the rest go: "My God and my All." In this, Jesus Christ is the model, and there is no spiritual growth apart from the earnest imitation of him. "Be continually careful and earnest in imitating Christ in everything, making your life conform to his," John writes in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, almost as a key sentence. Only in this light can we understand his insistence on the denial of desires. What he has in mind are all those selfish and self-seeking ways we go about trying to have God and what we want as well.

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